



## **New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual**

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Subchapter:	2	Resource Home Selection	
Issuance:	335	<b>Placement of Pregnant Adolescents or Minor Parents with Their Children in Resource Homes</b>	

### **Adolescents and/or Minor Parents with Their Children in CP&P Resource Homes**

#### **Purpose 6-25-2012**

This policy serves to establish procedures for the placement and care of pregnant adolescents and minor parents with their children in out-of-home placement. For policy on parent minors, see [CP&P-III-A-1-200](#).

#### **Introduction 6-25-2012**

A minor parent in foster care has the same rights as an adult parent, which include the right to care and custody of his or her child, and the right to make decisions regarding his/her child's educational needs, medical care, and daily routine. In addition, each pregnant adolescent and minor parent has the right to:

- Information about his or her rights and responsibilities around pregnancy, reproductive health, family planning, and early parenting;
- Live with his or her child;
- Continued/additional services;
- Supportive housing;
- Continuing education; and
- Extended family support.

The Division supports these rights by providing the pregnant adolescent/minor parent with services that reinforce permanency and well-being in a safe, stable, and nurturing resource home.

Although the law addresses the minor parent as female, this policy is gender neutral and applies to both male and female minor parents.

**Authority                      6-25-2012**

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. § 30:4C-26.20, if a minor is placed in a resource family home, group home, or institution, pursuant to section 26 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-26), and is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or gives birth to a child while in placement, the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families shall provide or arrange for the provision of services to ensure that the minor and her child remain together as a family unit.

A Division of Child Protection and Permanency Worker shall develop and implement a permanency plan for the minor parent and her child that will enable the minor to provide a safe and stable home for the child, and shall not limit the minor's legal right to make decisions regarding the care, custody, and supervision of her child.

The Division of Child Protection and Permanency shall not be required to arrange or provide for services to the minor and her child, if the Division has reasonable cause to believe that the minor's child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse or neglect by the minor parent.

**Definition of Terms                      6-25-2012**

**"Adolescent,"** for the purpose of this policy section, means a person from 13 to 21 years of age, who is receiving services from the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

**"Child of a minor parent"** means a child under the age of 18 years who is in the custody of his or her minor parent, who is in need of temporary resource care or residing in an out-of-home placement.

**"Contracted maternity home"** means a facility contracted by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency which offers temporary housing and other services to pregnant adolescents and/or minor parents with children.

**"Guideline For Minor Parents in Resource Care"** means CP&P Form [22-45](#), a tool to the FTM Prep, to be used in informal collaborative planning before or at the placement of a minor parent, or in conjunction with a Family Agreement prepared at a Family Team Meeting.

**"Kinship caregiver"** means a relative or family friend who has a relationship with the minor parent and who is willing to provide a safe home for the minor parent and his/her child, with the understanding that the kinship caregiver must conform to the policies and procedures of the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing (OOL), to be licensed as a resource family home.

**"Minor parent"** as defined in the statute, and pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-12), means a person 21 years of age or younger who is under the care and supervision or custody of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. The term "minor parent" is used in the feminine in the law, but is gender neutral in policy.

**"Out-of-home placement"** means a care provider or facility providing direct out-of-home placement care and services to a pregnant adolescent or minor parent and his/her child in an out-of-home placement setting, including a resource family home, a group home (including, but not limited to, a maternity home), a shelter, or a residential treatment center or facility.

**"Resource family home"** means a private residence, other than a children's group home, treatment home, teaching family home, alternative care home, or shelter, in which board, lodging, care and temporary out-of-home placement services are provided by a resource family parent on a 24-hour basis to a pregnant adolescent or minor parent under the auspices of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, including a home approved by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency for the placement of a child for the purpose of adoption.

**"Resource family parent"** means a person who is licensed by the Department to provide resource family care, including a person who is licensed to have a pregnant adolescent or minor parent placed with them for the purpose of adoption. This includes identified presumptive eligible kinship homes with relative placements who are awaiting formal approval and licensing by OOL.

**"The Resource Family Parent Agreement Addendum"** means CP&P Form [5-5a](#), a documented outline of the responsibilities of the resource family parent to the pregnant adolescent or the minor parent and the minor parent's child.

#### **Action Taken by SCR      6-25-2012**

The SCR Screener creates a Child Welfare Services (CWS) Assessment intake in NJ SPIRIT on new referrals requesting temporary placement of a pregnant adolescent or a minor parent and child. SCR opens a service case with both the minor parent and his/her child as case participants. The SCR Screener then assigns the case to the appropriate Local Office for assessment and services. When the pregnant adolescent and/or minor parent is 18 years of age or older, the SCR Screener considers opening the case as a separate household. See [CP&P-II-C-1-200](#).

#### **Placement Options for the Pregnant Adolescent/Minor Parent    6-25-2012**

The assigned Worker meets with the pregnant adolescent or minor parent and his/her parent/caregiver to assess service needs and discuss placement options. If determined that the pregnant adolescent's or minor parent's needs would best be served in an out-of-home placement, and all parties are in agreement, the Division petitions the court for

temporary custody of the pregnant adolescent or minor parent. Placement options include: foster care, contracted maternity homes, and institutional care. The custody of the minor parent's child remains with the minor parent.

### **Relevant NJS Windows and Forms 6-25-2012**

NJS forms:

- DCF Form [1-1](#), Screening Summary
- DCF Form [3-1](#), CWS Assessment Summary

NJS windows:

- Person Management Window
- Placement Window
- Maintain Case Window

### **Relevant Policy 6-25-2012**

- [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#), State Central Registry (SCR)-Centralized Screening

### **Using the Resource Family Parent Agreement Addendum 6-25-2012**

The Resource Family Parent Agreement Addendum, CP&P Form [5-5a](#), documents the responsibilities of the resource family parent to the minor parent and the minor parent's child. This form, along with CP&P Form [5-5](#), the Resource Family Parent Agreement Between State of New Jersey and Resource Family Parents, is presented to the resource family parent in the following situations:

- Initial approval process of the resource family home;
- The annual inspection of the resource family home where the resource family parent is caring for, or has expressed an interest in caring for a pregnant adolescent and/or minor parent and child; or
- When placing a pregnant adolescent and/or minor parent and his/her child in an existing resource home.

If the resource family parent is in agreement with the standards as set by the Division, he or she signs and dates the form in the designated areas along with the assigned Resource Family Support Worker.

### **Using the Guideline for Minor Parents in Resource Care 6-25-2012**

The Guideline for Minor Parents in Resource Care, CP&P Form [22-45](#), is used with the FTM Prep, for informal collaborative planning prior to, and/or at placement, or in conjunction with a Family Agreement which is prepared at a Family Team Meeting. The guideline identifies some negotiable items which may be a concern for the resource family parent, Division, or minor parent, while addressing non-negotiable items (e.g., court orders). Negotiable items can include, but are not limited to:

- Child care;
- Curfew for the minor parent;
- Bathing and feeding;
- Sleeping arrangements
- Daily living responsibilities of the minor parent in the resource home;
- Medical care responsibilities for the minor parent's child; and,
- Medical care for the pregnant teen (i.e., pre-natal, post-partum, reproductive health/primary care).
- Modify the Guideline for Minor Parents in Resource Care, CP&P Form [22-45](#), to address any significant changes which might impact the placement.

#### **Enhanced Board Rate    6-25-2012**

A resource family parent caring for a minor parent and his or her child, for whom the Division does not have legal custody, is entitled to an exceptional board rate. See [Level of Care Rate Table](#) for the exceptional rate paid:

- Click, where specified, to open the table.
- See current year monthly board rates.
- In the "Foster Care" table, in the "Age" column, see "Minor Parent."
- Look to the right to view the rates paid to a resource family parent caring for a minor parent with his/her child in foster care.

For pregnant adolescents in foster care placement, board rates are determined through the NJS Rate Assessment Tool. The rate is adjusted once the child is born.

The increased board for the minor parent and his/her child is used to cover expenses related to having a young child and minor parent reside in the resource home.

## **Medicaid for the Minor Parent's Child**

**6-25-2012**

The child of the minor parent may qualify for Code 60 Medicaid as long as the minor parent is in placement and Title IV-E eligible.

## **Working with a Pregnant Adolescent**

**6-25-2012**

Pregnant adolescents are a unique group of clients with special needs. When pregnant adolescents are known to the Division and receiving services prior to, or at the time of conception or birth, the assigned Worker and his/her Supervisor may have sufficient time to plan for placement and supplemental services, whereas new cases may limit the window of opportunity for placements and services. In either situation, the Worker takes into account the importance of the First Placement-Best Placement Practice Model for the pregnant adolescent. See [CP&P-III-B-2-300](#). **Efforts to secure a safe placement that will accommodate a pregnant adolescent and her child, once born, are paramount.**

Once an appropriate placement has been found, the Worker arranges for the pregnant adolescent to meet with the resource family parent or maternity home admissions liaison to discuss the placement and expectations.

Workers and Supervisors are often the first line of support and advocacy for pregnant adolescents. A Worker's ability to demonstrate compassion and sensitivity increases the chances for a good client-Worker relationship. A pregnant adolescent needs to feel a sense of control in her life; involving her in the placement process empowers her to make decisions, and become an advocate for herself and her child.

Extended family members or family friends may be willing to provide placement for the pregnant adolescent, and are always explored as a first option when placement is necessary. The Worker discusses with the pregnant adolescent any possible family/friend who may be a viable placement resource or a support to her. The Worker keeps the pregnant adolescent informed of any family/friend rule-outs with sufficient explanation of the rule-out decision.

When needed, the Resource Family Placement Facilitator (RFPF) works in tandem with the assigned Worker to seek alternative placement options with local resource family parents. Contracted maternity homes may be an appropriate option for the placement of some older pregnant adolescents who do not require a family-like setting. The assigned Worker initiates referrals to contracted maternity homes.

## **Prenatal Treatment for Pregnant Adolescents**

**6-25-2012**

Establish pre-natal care early in the pregnancy of the pregnant adolescent. A pregnant adolescent's health and well-being can directly impact the health of her baby. Routine pre-natal care can detect and prevent many health issues often associated with teen pregnancy (e.g., birth defects, Down's syndrome, etc.). Also, depression, tobacco,

alcohol or other drug use and partner violence can have a profound impact on the pregnancy and development of the unborn child. Refer all pregnant adolescents and minor parents to the CP&P Local Office Child Health Unit nurse. This provides needed support and is an excellent resource for connecting pregnant adolescents to an obstetrics and gynecological physician (OB-GYN) as well as other health care specialists and social/parenting support.

Often, pregnant adolescents may receive little, if any, pre-natal care; reasons can range from fear, denial or shame of the pregnancy, to lack of knowledge of medical services or inadequate health care benefits. When presented with a case where there is a denial of the pregnancy, the Worker considers the benefits of securing an appropriate mental and/or behavioral health evaluation and services for the pregnant adolescent.

The role of the resource family parent with a pregnant adolescent can vary depending on the pregnant adolescent's age, maturity level, and developmental state. Guidance, support, and assistance from the resource family parent are crucial to the success of the placement and to ensure a healthy pregnancy. The scheduling of pre-natal visits and other medical appointments is the responsibility of the pregnant adolescent, with assistance from the resource family parent, as needed.

#### **Related NJS Windows and Forms      6-25-2012**

##### **NJS forms**

- CP&P Form [4-5](#), Kinship Legal Guardianship Assessment
- CP&P Form [5-16](#), Child's Education Record
- CP&P Form [11-10](#), Health Passport and Placement Assessment
- CP&P Form [22-6](#), NJ Child Safety Assessment (Resource Homes)
- CP&P Form [22-24](#), NJ CP&P Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessment
- CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan

#### **Relevant Policy      6-25-2012**

- [CP&P-III-B-2-200](#), Commitment to Permanency
- [CP&P-III-B-2-300](#), Concurrent Permanency Planning
- [CP&P-III-B-2-100](#), Permanency Planning
- [CP&P-IV-B-8-100](#), Health Care Services

- [CP&P-V-A-5-900](#), Role of the Worker/Caregiver/CP&P Local Office Child Health Unit Nurse

## **Minor Parent and Child**

**6-25-2012**

Minor parents under the age of majority are legally responsible for their child. When the Division is awarded custody of the minor parent, the court order does not include the minor parent's child. The custody of the minor parent's child remains with the minor parent.

Good case practice suggests the minor parent's case plan include the needs of his/her child and that the child's needs and interests be addressed during the fifth-month periodic review and permanency hearings held on behalf of the minor parent. However, the Division is not required to satisfy these requirements independently on behalf of the child of the minor parent since he/she is not under the responsibility of the Division for placement and care.

If an allegation of abuse or neglect to the minor parent's child is alleged, and the minor parent is the alleged perpetrator, the Worker/Supervisor contacts the State Central Registry (SCR). The SCR Screener generates a Child Protective Services report (CPS) and names the minor parent as the alleged perpetrator. The SCR Screener then assigns the CPS report to the Local Office for investigation.

## **Placement of a Minor Parent with Child in Out-of-Home Care 6-25-2012**

An out-of-home placement can be an overwhelming experience. The minor parent may be attempting to process separation from family and friends, the loss of familiar surroundings, as well as adjusting to his/her parenting role.

Allow the minor parent sufficient time to acclimate to his/her new surroundings and responsibilities. Minor parents may want to exercise their rights and responsibilities as parents and need to be given the opportunity to do so in a safe and caring environment.

Minor parents may come into placement with their own ideas and designs. Many may have experienced independence in their previous living arrangement and may feel they have the same liberties in temporary care, overlooking their parental responsibility. The Worker needs to understand the changes the minor parent may be experiencing and help him/her with the adjustment.

Use CP&P Form [22-45](#), Guideline for Minor Parents in Resource Care, to discuss and document the minor parent's and resource family parent's negotiable and non-negotiable items and expectations. This can help reduce future discord and dissension and promote stronger, healthier relations between the resource family parent and the minor parent, while reinforcing the parent-child bond between the minor parent and his/her child.

## **Working with a Minor Parent and Child in Out-of-Home Care      6-25-2012**

Include the minor parent in decision-making and problem-solving. This can increase confidence and reduce feelings of despair and isolation. Assessing the minor parent's ability to make sound decisions and use good judgment is essential. Having an understanding of the minor parent's abilities allows the Worker and minor parent to develop the best case.

Many minor parents can greatly benefit from individual and/or group therapeutic services. Possible feelings the minor parent may be experiencing include, but are not limited to: postpartum depression, anxiety, and dejection. Encourage the minor parent to attend regular therapy with counselors experienced in adolescent behavior and minor parents.

In that the minor parent is expected to take responsibility for his/her child, the Worker and resource family parent must afford the minor parent the latitude to parent and provide the support needed to succeed. Parenting education, skills development, and home visitation programs can equip the minor parent with the proper tools, techniques and education to successfully care for his/her child. In addition, they can provide the minor parent with a social network of peers and mentors. Parenting education and /or home visiting programs that support the goals of the minor parent and the Division are vital to the success of the case plan.

## **Role of the Resource Family Parent with the Minor Parent      6-25-2012**

Resource family parents always play a pivotal role in the care of children under the supervision of the Division. When caring for a minor parent, the resource family parent provides routine care and supervision to the minor parent, as outlined in the Resource Family Parent Agreement Between State of New Jersey and Resource Family Parents, CP&P Form [5-5](#). In addition, the resource family parent oversees the daily parenting of the minor parent to his/her child. This includes, but is not limited to: feeding, bathing, making and keeping medical appointments, education. Upon meeting with the minor parent and Worker, the resource family parent defines his/her house rules (e.g., curfew, bedtime, chore schedules, etc.). This is also an excellent opportunity for the resource family parent to gather information from the minor parent as to his/her expectations about the placement, likes/dislikes, goals he/she has set for him/herself, how the minor parent views his/her current circumstances, and the role of the minor parent's child's non-custodial parent, if any.

The resource family parent encourages the minor parent to take a pro-active role in his/her life by engaging him/her in various aspects of the daily-living routine. Teach minor parents basic household responsibilities, (e.g., grocery shopping, meal preparation, laundry and money management). These skills are useful to the minor parent long after the placement has ended. The resource family parent creates an environment that meets the needs of the minor parent and allows for learning and mentoring without judgment or criticism. For a minor parent enrolled in a parenting

skills program, the resource family parent works in tandem with the program to reinforce the training and build upon the minor parent's knowledge base. Progress of the minor parent is documented by the resource family parent and shared with the assigned Worker.

As in all successful fostering situations, the resource family parent and his/her family include the minor parent and child in family events and everyday family life. Being actively involved in resource family functions can help build family ties and promote a sense of belonging for both the minor parent and his/her child. In addition, appropriate family functions provide the minor parent a model to emulate, in which he/she can develop appropriate parenting techniques.

### **Role of the Resource Family Parent with the Minor Parent's Child      6-25-2012**

When working with the child of the minor parent, the resource family parent acts in a role supportive to the minor parent. The resource family parent ensures the daily care routine for the child is executed appropriately by the minor parent. In many situations, the minor parent may require assistance in the bathing and feeding of his/her child. These are excellent teaching opportunities. Using gentle and non-threatening cues, the resource family parent can advise, instruct, and guide the minor parent with these tasks and promote positive parent-child interactions and nurturing relationships.

The resource family parent plays an active role in overseeing the safety, health, and well-being of the minor parent's child, without infringing on the minor parent's legal rights to make decisions regarding the care, custody, and supervision of his/her child or interfere in the day-to-day parenting of the child. The resource family parent can act as intermediate care provider to the minor parent's child to allow the minor parent some alone time or social time with peers.

### **Resource Family Parent's Responsibilities in Reporting Abuse/Neglect Incidents in the Resource Home      4-1-2013**

The resource family parent's first concern is the safety, well-being, and care of all members of his/her home, including the children of minor parents. Therefore, the resource family parent must be diligent in his/her observations of the minor parent's interaction with his/her child. A daily routine can familiarize the resource family parent with the habits of the minor parent and his/her child.

The resource family parent **must** report all incidents or acts of suspected abuse and/or neglect to SCR for investigation. See [CP&P-IV-B-6-300](#). Incidents might include, but are not limited to:

- Leaving the child unattended (e.g., during bath or feeding time);
- Not providing adequate supervision;

- Placing the child at risk or in harmful situations; and
- Striking a child or using excessive, inappropriate, or dangerous disciplinary techniques.

If, during the investigation, it is determined that the incident did not rise to the level of abuse or neglect, or, the level of abuse or neglect does not warrant separation of the minor parent from his/her child, the Worker addresses with the minor parent and resource family parent the ways in which such incidents can be avoided. The Worker encourages the minor parent to express him/herself and discuss obstacles which may impede the minor parent's ability to make changes and/or correct undesirable behavior.

If the minor parent was responsible for an Established incident, the Worker and Supervisor confer to determine how best to proceed.

In cases where abuse or neglect is Substantiated, the minor parent is named the Substantiated perpetrator, **and** it is determined that the minor parent can no longer maintain custody of his/her child, the Worker, along with his/her Supervisor, act to secure the safety and well-being of the minor parent's child. The Worker and his/her Supervisor initiate court action via the Deputy Attorney General (DAG) in order for CP&P to obtain legal custody of the minor parent's child.

Upon gaining custody of the minor parent's child, the Worker and his/her Supervisor seek appropriate placement for the child. Placement of the child is not limited to a separate placement from the minor parent, but can include remaining in the home where the minor parent is placed, with the Division having care and custody of the minor parent's child. The Worker and Supervisor make reasonable efforts to prevent removal (e.g., provide access to in-home services, such as Family Preservation Services). If the child must be separated from the minor parent, arrange a visitation plan to reinforce and strengthen the parent-child bond.

### **Developing a Permanency Plan for the Minor Parent      6-25-2012**

The Division is required to secure permanency for a minor parent in placement. If all parties are in agreement to reunification, and it is in the best interest of the minor parent, the Worker develops a visitation plan to include regular visits between the minor parent and his/her family. Determine whether it is in the best interest of the minor parent and his/her child to develop and maintain familial relationships with the non-custodial parent of the minor parent or child.

In accordance with Components of Concurrent Permanency Planning, [CP&P-III-B-2-300](#), the resource family parent plays a key role in the permanency planning of a child and his/her family. Interaction between the resource family parent and family has proven to be extremely beneficial in the reunification process. The resource family parent's role is one of support and advocacy, not just for the minor parent, but also for

the family. Often times, the relationship between the resource family parent and the family continues long after the Division has terminated its involvement.

Use the CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan, and CP&P Form [26-83](#), Visitation Plan, in NJS to document the permanency plan and visitation schedule of the minor parent and his/her family.

When working with the family for the purpose of reunification (i.e., returning minor parent and his/her child home), the Worker maintains contact with the family in accordance with the minimum visitation requirements (MVR) schedule. See [CP&P-III-C-3-100](#). Throughout these contacts, the Worker gathers information relevant to the case plan:

- Family's ability to meet the case goal;
- Major changes in the home/family which might impede the family's ability to reunify with the minor parent and child at the mutually agreed upon goal date; and,
- Family's willingness to accept the minor parent's child into the family home.

The family is reassessed using Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools in NJS. If other children reside in the home, and the family was investigated for a Child Protective Services report during the present history of the case, the Worker completes CP&P Form [22-26](#), New Jersey CP&P Family Risk Reassessment (In-Home Cases). In all cases of reunification, the Worker must complete CP&P Form [22-27](#), New Jersey Family Reunification Assessment, prior to returning the minor parent to the family home.

When reunification is not in the best interest of the minor parent in placement, or the minor parent does not want to return home, and he or she is of sufficient age and maturity to make that determination, the Worker pursues an alternative permanency plan. See [CP&P-III-B-2-200](#). The MVR schedule is maintained throughout the case plan. See [CP&P-III-C-3-100](#).

#### **Relevant NJS Windows and Forms     6-25-2012**

- CP&P Form [22-27](#), NJ Family Reunification Assessment
- CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan
- CP&P Form [26-83](#), Visitation Plan

#### **Relevant Policy                     6-25-2012**

- [CP&P-I-A-1-200](#), Case Management Philosophy

- [CP&P-III-B-2-300](#), Concurrent Permanency Planning
- [CP&P-III-B-2-100](#), Permanency Planning